



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

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4/9/52*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES REQUIRE VIGILANT  
CARE DURING EMERGENCY, SAYS SECRETARY CHAPMAN

Permanent damage could be done to the Nation's fish and wildlife resources by the pressures which the national emergency puts upon them unless unremitting vigilance is exercised, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman warned today in releasing the Department's annual report for fiscal year 1951.

"Today we face a recurring pressure to make unwarranted cuts in our stocks of fish and wildlife, to relax the standards necessary for their protection, and to take untried short cuts to management. Self-interested groups occasionally use an emergency situation like the present to advance projects for the exploitation of some natural resource not actually associated with critical need," declared the Secretary.

"As a consequence, the responsibilities of such agencies as the Fish and Wildlife Service are greatly increased during a period of national emergency. Both the organization and its program must be vigorously maintained if we are to get both the maximum usefulness of these resources and assurance that we do not needlessly destroy resources that will be useful in the future."

Director Albert M. Day of the Fish and Wildlife Service pointed out in his agency's report that this Nation's fishery resources supply not only valuable food but also a great number of by-products, all of value in wartime. In 1950 the commercial fishery catch of the United States and Alaska amounted to 4.9 billion pounds, nearly half of which went into the manufacture of by-products.

Exploratory fishing investigations were undertaken on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and in the Gulf of Mexico to develop new sources of commercial supplies of food fishes. The vessel Oregon, operating in the Gulf of Mexico, discovered concentrations of large brown-grooved shrimp in depths of from 30 to 50 fathoms off the coasts of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In New England a 4-month survey of the commercial possibilities of blue fin tuna fishing was started.

The vessel John N. Cobb based at Seattle, Wash., completed a 4-month survey of albacore tuna in the fall of 1950. Extensive gear tests demonstrated that albacore could be taken in commercial quantities with gill nets, a type of gear new to that fishery. Two exploratory shellfish cruises to southeastern Alaska located unfished shrimp populations in inland waters adjacent to Sitka and Juneau.

In the central Pacific studies were continued to collect data on the range distribution, life history and migrations of the several species of tuna which are so valuable to the fishing industry. Biologists, acting as official observers for the

High Commissioner of the Trust Territories and the Fish and Wildlife Service, accompanied Japanese postwar tuna fishing expeditions to tropical waters to record the biological, commercial, and technical phases of the project.

Home economists of the Service conducted 170 fish-cookery demonstrations for homemakers, institutional managers, educational groups, and school lunch supervisors. A project to promote the use of fish in the national school lunch program was carried out in 11 States.

A total of 60,204 fur seal skins was taken on the Pribilof Islands in 1950. At the public auction sales held in St. Louis in October 1950 and April 1951, a total of 51,427 Government-owned fur seal skins was sold for the gross amount of \$5,046,311.

The production of game fish in the 99 Federal hatcheries was continued at a high level during fiscal year 1951. Funds provided by the Congress permitted construction to begin on new hatcheries in South and North Dakota, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Michigan. Funds were also available to continue the enlargement and improvement of 23 older hatcheries in 19 States.

The Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit Program, in which the Service participates with the Wildlife Management Institute, land-grant colleges and State conservation departments, was expanded by the establishment of the Arizona Unit, bringing the total to 17 units. During the school year of 1950 more than 300 wildlife students were graduated from Unit schools; and approximately 160 wildlife publications appeared under the authorship of Unit personnel.

A new rat and mouse poison, known as Warfarin, was one of the most spectacular contributions to improved control methods during the past year. This chemical is less hazardous to human beings and domestic animals than most other commonly used rodenticides and is their equal or superior in controlling animal pests.

The recorded catch of predatory animals included 60,445 coyotes, 1,378 wolves, 13,343 bobcats and lynxes, 733 stock-killing bears, and 229 mountain lions.

The acquisition of two important waterfowl refuge areas was initiated during the year. In Florida the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District is making 100,000 acres of land in Water Conservation Area No. 1 in Palm Beach County available to the Service. This area, made up of ponds, sloughs, and marshes with interspersed hammocks, will be a valuable addition to the wintering areas for waterfowl.

Under the California wildlife management program, 2,550 acres of land in the San Joaquin Valley is being purchased. Located in Merced County, this tract will provide a feeding area for migrating waterfowl and will aid in the reduction of crop depredation on nearby agricultural lands. All or part of the area will be open to public hunting when the size of the waterfowl population warrants such action.

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